Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of the claims will replace all prior versions, and listing, of claims in the application:

Listing of the Claims:

1. (currently amended): A method of producing an active nickel powder~~, said method~~ comprising ~~the steps of~~:

   a) providing a feed material comprising nickel chloride wherein the feed material ~~has~~ comprises a surface area in excess of about 1 m^2/g~~, preferably between 35 and 100 m^2/g~~;

   b) reducing said feed material with a reducing gas at a temperature of at least about 300°C[[,]]; and

   c) recovering the resulting active nickel powder.

2. (currently amended): A method of producing an active nickel powder~~, said method~~ comprising ~~the steps of~~:

   a) providing a feed material comprising nickel chloride and other reducible nickel salts~~, such as nickel carbonate, nickel sulphate and nickel hydroxide~~, wherein the weight ratio of chloride to total nickel is greater than 0.1 and wherein the feed material ~~has~~ comprises a surface area in excess of about 1 m^2/g;~~ preferably between 35 and 100 m^2/g;~~

   b) reducing said feed material with a reducing gas at a temperature of at least about 300°C[[,]]; and

   c) recovering the resulting active nickel powder.

3. (currently amended): A method of producing an active nickel powder~~, said method~~ comprising ~~the steps of~~:

a) providing a feed material comprising reducible nickel salts~~, such as nickel carbonate, nickel sulphate and nickel hydroxide, and optionally nickel chloride, and~~ wherein the feed material ~~has~~ comprises a surface area in excess of about 1 m^2/g~~, preferably between 35 and 100 m^2/g~~;

b) reducing said feed material with a reducing gas at a temperature of at least about 300°C and concurrently contacting said feed material with HCl gas so as to convert at least a portion of the reducible nickel salts feed material to nickel chloride ~~and~~ wherein the resulting ratio of chloride to total nickel is greater than 0.1[[,]]; and

c) recovering the resulting active nickel powder.

4. (currently amended): A method of producing an active nickel powder~~, said method~~ comprising ~~the steps of~~:

a) providing a feed material comprising reducible nickel salts~~, such as nickel carbonate, nickel sulphate and nickel hydroxide, and optionally nickel chloride,~~ mixed with other soluble metal chloride salts, such as $CrCl_3$, $FeCl_3$, $FeCl_2$, wherein the weight ratio of chloride to total nickel is greater than 0.1 and wherein the feed material ~~has~~ comprises a surface area in excess of about 1 m^2/g~~, preferably between 35 and 100 m^2/g~~;

b) reducing said feed material with a reducing gas at a temperature of at least about 300°C, and

c) recovering the resulting active nickel powder.

5. (currently amended): A method of producing nickel carbonyl~~, said method~~ comprising ~~the steps of~~:

a) providing a feed material comprising nickel chloride wherein the feed material ~~has~~ comprises a surface area in excess of about 1 m^2/g~~, preferably between 35 and 100 m^2/g~~;

b) reducing said feed material with a reducing gas at a temperature of at least about 300°C; and

c) contacting the resulting active nickel powder with a gas containing carbon monoxide at atmospheric or super atmospheric pressure to obtain nickel carbonyl.

6. (currently amended): A method of producing nickel carbonyl~~, said method~~ comprising ~~the steps of~~:

a) providing a feed material comprising nickel chloride and other reducible nickel salts~~, such as nickel carbonate, nickel sulphate and nickel hydroxide,~~ wherein the weight ratio of chloride to total nickel is greater than 0.1 and wherein the feed material ~~has~~ comprises a surface area in excess of about 1 m^2/g~~, preferably between 35 and 100 m^2/g~~;

b) reducing said feed material with a reducing gas at a temperature of at least about 300°C[[,]]; and

c) contacting the resulting active nickel powder with a gas containing carbon monoxide at atmospheric or superatmospheric pressure to obtain nickel carbonyl.

7. (currently amended): A method of producing nickel carbonyl~~, said method~~ comprising ~~the steps of~~:

a) providing a feed material comprising reducible nickel salts~~, such as nickel carbonate, nickel sulphate and nickel hydroxide, and optionally nickel chloride~~, ~~and~~ wherein the feed material ~~has~~ comprises a surface area in excess of about 1 m^2/g~~, preferably between 35 and 100 m^2/g~~;

b) reducing said feed material with a reducing gas at a temperature of at least about 300°C and concurrently contacting said feed material with HCl gas so as to convert at least a portion of the reducible nickel salts feed material to nickel chloride ~~and~~ wherein the resulting ratio of chloride to total nickel is greater than 0.1[[,]]; and

c) contacting the resulting active nickel powder with a gas containing carbon monoxide at atmospheric or superatmospheric pressure to obtain nickel carbonyl.

8. (currently amended): A method of producing nickel carbonyl~~, said method~~ comprising ~~the steps of~~:

a) providing a feed material comprising reducible nickel salts~~, such as nickel carbonate, nickel sulphate and nickel hydroxide, and optionally nickel chloride,~~ mixed with other soluble metal chloride salts~~, such as $CrCl_3$, $FeCl_3$, $FeCl_2$~~, wherein the weight ratio of chloride to total nickel is greater than 0.1 and wherein the feed material ~~has~~ comprises a surface area in excess of about 1 m^2/g~~, preferably between 35 and 100 m^2/g~~;

b) reducing said feed material with a reducing gas at a temperature of at least about 300°C[[,]]; and

c) contacting the resulting active nickel powder with a gas containing carbon monoxide at atmospheric or superatmospheric pressure to obtain nickel carbonyl.

9. (currently amended): The method of ~~any one of claims 1 to 8~~ claim 1 wherein said reducing step b) is performed at temperatures between 300°C and 600°C.

10. (currently amended): The method of ~~any one of claims 5 to 8~~ claim 5 wherein step c) is performed at temperatures between 20°C and 100°C.

11. (currently amended): The method of ~~any one of claims 1 to 10~~ claim 1 wherein step a) is performed by mixing together dry components.

12. (currently amended): The method of ~~any one of claims 1 to 10~~ claim 1 wherein step a) is performed by wet mixing components and then removing the water by drying.

13. (currently amended): The method of ~~any one of claims 1 to 10~~ claim 1 wherein step a) is performed by wet mixing components in the presence of HCl.

14. (currently amended): The method of ~~any one of claims 1 to 10~~ claim 1 wherein step a) is performed by adding alkali~~, such as Na_2CO_3,~~ to an aqueous solution of reducible nickel salts ~~including nickel chloride~~, and then removing the water by drying.

15. (currently amended): The method of ~~any one of claims 1 to 14~~ claim 1 wherein the reducing gas in step b) ~~contains~~ comprises hydrogen.

16. (currently amended): The method of ~~any one of claims 12 to 15~~ claim 12 wherein the drying portion of steps a) and the reducing portion of step b) are conducted concurrently.

17. (currently amended): The method of ~~any one of claims 12 to 15~~ claim 12 wherein steps a) and b) are conducted sequentially.

18. (currently amended): The method of ~~any one of claims 1 and 5~~ claim 1 wherein in step a), said nickel chloride is in the form of hydrates of nickel~~, such as $NiCl_2.6H_20$~~.

19. (currently amended): ~~Method~~ The method ~~according to any one~~ of ~~claims 1 to 18~~ claim 1, wherein ~~if~~ the active nickel powder becomes de-activated due to storage in the absence of oxygen ~~at the end of the process of claims 1 to 4 or after step b) in claims 5 to 8, it is~~ and becomes re-activated by exposing ~~it~~ the active nickel powder to gas containing H_2 at a temperature of at least about 150°C.

20. (currently amended): ~~Method~~ The method ~~according to any one~~ of ~~claims 1 to 18~~ claim 19, wherein ~~if~~ the active nickel powder becomes ~~de-activated due to storage in the absence of oxygen, it is~~ re-activated by exposing ~~it~~ the active nickel powder to gas containing H_2 at a temperature between 150°C and 600°C.

21. (currently amended): ~~Method~~ The method ~~according to~~ of claim 1 wherein in step a), the weight ratio of chloride to total nickel is grater than 0.1.

22. (new): The method of claim 1, wherein the feed material comprises a surface area in excess of between 35 and 100 m^2/g.

23. (new): The method of claim 14 wherein the alkali salt is Na_2CO_3.

24. (new): The method of claim 23, wherein the reducible nickel salt is nickel chloride.

25. (new): The method of claim 18, wherein the form of hydrates of nickel is $NiCl_2$ $6H_20$.

26. (new): The method of claim 2, wherein the reducible nickel salt is selected from the group consisting of nickel carbonate, nickel sulfate, and nickel hydroxide.

27. (new): The method of claim 2, wherein the feed material comprises a surface area in excess of between 35 and 100 m^2/g.

28. (new): The method of claim 2 wherein said reducing step b) is performed at temperatures between 300°C and 600°C.

29. (new): The method of claim 2 wherein step a) is performed by mixing together dry components.

30. (new): The method of claim 2 wherein step a) is performed by wet mixing components and then removing the water by drying.

31. (new): The method of claim 2 wherein step a) is performed by wet mixing components in the presence of HCl.

32. (new): The method of claim 2 wherein step a) is performed by adding alkali to an aqueous solution of reducible nickel salt and then removing the water by drying.

33. (new): The method of claim 2 wherein the reducing gas in step b) comprises hydrogen.

34. (new): The method of claim 2 wherein in step a), said nickel chloride is in the form of hydrates of nickel.

35. (new): The method of claim 34, wherein the form of hydrates of nickel is $NiCl_2$ $6H_20$.

36. (new): The method of claim 2, wherein the active nickel powder becomes de-activated due to storage in the absence of oxygen, and becomes re-activated by exposing the active nickel powder to gas containing H_2 at a temperature of at least about 150°C.

37. (new): The method of claim 3, wherein the reducible nickel salt is selected from the group consisting of nickel carbonate, nickel sulfate, nickel hydroxide, and nickel chloride.

38. (new): The method of claim 3, wherein the feed material comprises a surface area in excess of between 35 and 100 m^2/g.

39. (new): The method of claim 3 wherein said reducing step b) is performed at temperatures between 300°C and 600°C.

40. (new): The method of claim 3 wherein step a) is performed by mixing together dry components.

41. (new): The method of claim 3 wherein step a) is performed by wet mixing components and then removing the water by drying.

42. (new): The method of claim 3 wherein step a) is performed by wet mixing components in the presence of HCl.

43. (new): The method of claim 3 wherein step a) is performed by adding alkali to an aqueous solution of reducible nickel salt and then removing the water by drying.

44. (new): The method of claim 3 wherein the reducing gas in step b) comprises hydrogen.

45. (new): The method of claim 3, wherein the active nickel powder becomes de-activated due to storage in the absence of oxygen, and becomes re-activated by exposing the active nickel powder to gas containing H_2 at a temperature of at least about 150°C.

46. (new): The method of claim 4, wherein the reducible nickel salt is selected from the group consisting of nickel carbonate, nickel sulfate, nickel hydroxide, and nickel chloride.

47. (new): The method of claim 4, wherein the feed material comprises a surface area in excess of between 35 and 100 m^2/g.

49. (new): The method of claim 4 wherein said reducing step b) is performed at temperatures between 300°C and 600°C.

50. (new): The method of claim 4 wherein step a) is performed by mixing together dry components.

51. (new): The method of claim 4 wherein step a) is performed by wet mixing components and then removing the water by drying.

52. (new): The method of claim 4 wherein step a) is performed by wet mixing components in the presence of HCl.

53. (new): The method of claim 4 wherein step a) is performed by adding alkali to an aqueous solution of reducible nickel salt and then removing the water by drying.

54. (new): The method of claim 4 wherein the reducing gas in step b) comprises hydrogen.

55. (new): The method of claim 4, wherein the active nickel powder becomes de-activated due to storage in the absence of oxygen, and becomes re-activated by exposing the active nickel powder to gas containing H_2 at a temperature of at least about 150°C.

56. (new): The method of claim 5, wherein the feed material comprises a surface area in excess of between 35 and 100 m^2/g.

57. (new): The method of claim 5 wherein said reducing step b) is performed at temperatures between 300°C and 600°C.

58. (new): The method of claim 5 wherein step a) is performed by mixing together dry components.

59. (new): The method of claim 5 wherein step a) is performed by wet mixing components and then removing the water by drying.

60. (new): The method of claim 5 wherein step a) is performed by wet mixing components in the presence of HCl.

61. (new): The method of claim 5 wherein step a) is performed by adding alkali to an aqueous solution of reducible nickel salt and then removing the water by drying.

62. (new): The method of claim 5 wherein the reducing gas in step b) comprises hydrogen.

63. (new): The method of claim 5 wherein in step a), said nickel chloride is in the form of hydrates of nickel.

64. (new): The method of claim 63, wherein the form of hydrates of nickel is $NiCl_2$ $6H_20$.

65. (new): The method of claim 5, wherein the active nickel powder becomes de-activated due to storage in the absence of oxygen, and becomes re-activated by exposing the active nickel powder to gas containing H_2 at a temperature of at least about 150°C.

66. (new): The method of claim 6, wherein the reducible nickel salt is selected from the group consisting of nickel carbonate, nickel sulfate, and nickel hydroxide.

67. (new): The method of claim 6, wherein the feed material comprises a surface area in excess of between 35 and 100 m^2/g.

68. (new): The method of claim 6 wherein said reducing step b) is performed at temperatures between 300°C and 600°C.

69. (new): The method of claim 6 wherein step a) is performed by mixing together dry components.

70. (new): The method of claim 6 wherein step a) is performed by wet mixing components and then removing the water by drying.

71. (new): The method of claim 6 wherein step a) is performed by wet mixing components in the presence of HCl.

72. (new): The method of claim 6 wherein step a) is performed by adding alkali to an aqueous solution of reducible nickel salt and then removing the water by drying.

73. (new): The method of claim 6 wherein the reducing gas in step b) comprises hydrogen.

74. (new): The method of claim 6 wherein in step a), said nickel chloride is in the form of hydrates of nickel.

75. (new): The method of claim 74, wherein the form of hydrates of nickel is $NiCl_2$ $6H_20$.

76. (new): The method of claim 6, wherein the active nickel powder becomes de-activated due to storage in the absence of oxygen, and becomes re-activated by exposing the active nickel powder to gas containing H_2 at a temperature of at least about 150°C.

77. (new): The method of claim 7, wherein the reducible nickel salt is selected from the group consisting of nickel carbonate, nickel sulfate, nickel hydroxide, and nickel chloride.

78. (new): The method of claim 7, wherein the feed material comprises a surface area in excess of between 35 and 100 m^2/g.

79. (new): The method of claim 7 wherein said reducing step b) is performed at temperatures between 300°C and 600°C.

80. (new): The method of claim 7 wherein step a) is performed by mixing together dry components.

81. (new): The method of claim 7 wherein step a) is performed by wet mixing components and then removing the water by drying.

82. (new): The method of claim 7 wherein step a) is performed by wet mixing components in the presence of HCl.

83. (new): The method of claim 7 wherein step a) is performed by adding alkali to an aqueous solution of reducible nickel salt and then removing the water by drying.

84. (new): The method of claim 7 wherein the reducing gas in step b) comprises hydrogen.

85. (new): The method of claim 7, wherein the active nickel powder becomes de-activated due to storage in the absence of oxygen, and becomes re-activated by exposing the active nickel powder to gas containing H_2 at a temperature of at least about 150°C.

86. (new): The method of claim 8, wherein the reducible nickel salt is selected from the group consisting of nickel carbonate, nickel sulfate, nickel hydroxide, and nickel chloride.

88. (new): The method of claim 8, wherein the feed material comprises a surface area in excess of between 35 and 100 m^2/g.

89. (new): The method of claim 8 wherein said reducing step b) is performed at temperatures between 300°C and 600°C.

90. (new): The method of claim 8 wherein step a) is performed by mixing together dry components.

91. (new): The method of claim 8 wherein step a) is performed by wet mixing components and then removing the water by drying.

92. (new): The method of claim 8 wherein step a) is performed by wet mixing components in the presence of HCl.

93. (new): The method of claim 8 wherein step a) is performed by adding alkali to an aqueous solution of reducible nickel salt and then removing the water by drying.

94. (new): The method of claim 8 wherein the reducing gas in step b) comprises hydrogen.

95. (new): The method of claim 8, wherein the active nickel powder becomes de-activated due to storage in the absence of oxygen, and becomes re-activated by exposing the active nickel powder to gas containing H_2 at a temperature of at least about 150°C.

96. (new): The method of claim 8, wherein the soluble metal chloride salt is selected from the group consisting of $CrCl_3$, $FeCl_3$, and $FeCl_2$.